Seattle City Council

Monday, December 10, 2012

Dear Colleague,

First of all, thank you for your continuing efforts and commitment to the SR 520 Project. We have appreciated your leadership and cooperation with the City of Seattle as we work together to meet our regional mobility needs of today and into the future. We also applaud the State for being a willing and able partner in addressing the concerns and needs of our communities. Much work remains, but we have a solid foundation of cooperation to continue our progress.

As you are aware, in September, the Council with the Mayor concurring adopted a resolution that formalized City policy regarding the potential construction of a second bascule bridge as part of the SR 520 Project across the Montlake Cut. After a lengthy technical review process involving staff from the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), King County Metro Transit and the City Council, we arrived at a decision to recommend against constructing a second bascule bridge in the foreseeable future. However, we recognize, as the State did by including a second bascule bridge as part of the SR 520 Project Preferred Alternative, that transit, bicycle and pedestrian access to, from and across the 520 corridor represents a challenge that must be addressed to accommodate future growth.

In order to examine the potential of other more cost effective solutions compared to a $100 million investment in a second bascule bridge that may address bicycle and pedestrian capacity issues but unlikely to yield substantial transit benefits, the Council took two specific budget actions for 2013 that we look for the State's cooperation in implementing:

- $160,000 appropriation for a "Montlake Corridor Transit Reliability Study" to be led by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates. The study will recommend transit priority projects in the 2.5 mile corridor from NE Pacific Street and 15th Avenue NE to 23rd Avenue E and E. John Street that will improve transit travel time and reliability. The study will identify locations and sources of delay and reliability challenges in the corridor.

- $60,000 appropriation for a "bike and pedestrian access feasibility study" across the Montlake Cut and to fund new, ongoing monitoring of user volumes. The study will evaluate options that enhance bicycle and pedestrian mobility and safety on and around the Montlake Bridge that include widening usable sidewalk areas, managing bicycle and pedestrian flow and direction on the existing structure, construction of a new, separate, bicycle and pedestrian bridge, and other potential improvements. With this funding appropriated and approved unanimously by the City Council, we are hoping that WSDOT will fully participate in a cooperative role with SDOT and the City Council in advancing these two efforts to examine alternative investments to enhance transit, bicycle and pedestrian access and mobility in the SR 520 corridor.

Together, over the last several years, we have dramatically improved the SR 520 Project scope and design through Seattle. Much of the credit belongs to the countless hours spent by active community members and leaders that have helped shape a sustainable vision for the project. But WSDOT has also been an active listener in transforming concepts into concrete design refinements. We are optimistic that through these two

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study efforts, we will again identify better and more effective solutions to meet the needs of our State and the residents of our city. We look forward to your continued leadership and cooperation with Seattle on the SR 520 Project.

As usual, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Council President Sally J. Clark

Councilmember Sally Bagshaw

Councilmember Tim Burgess

Councilmember Richard Conlin

Councilmember Jean Godden

Councilmember Bruce A. Harrell

Councilmember Nick Licata

Councilmember Mike O'Brien

Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

cc: Governor-elect Jay Inslee
Representative Judy Clibborn
Senator Tracey Eide
Representative Mark Hargrove
Senator Curtis King
Senator Jeanne Kohl Welles
Senator Ed Murray
Senator Adam Kline
Senator Sharon Nelson
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Senator Maralyn Chase
Representative Ruth Kagi
Representative Cindy Ryu
Paula Hammond, WSDOT
Theresa Doherty, Director of Regional Relations, UW
Executive Dow Constantine, King County
Irene Plenefisch, Government Affairs Manager, Microsoft
Kevin Desmond, King County Metro

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